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## CINEMAPHOBIA

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## EDITORIAL




A little late, but what the hell, **Cinemaphobia** prevails for yet another issue. I'm sure that most of you out there who have anything to do with self-publishing ventures are painfully aware of a problem called "negative-cash-flowitis"! Well, we suffered from a bout of that (coupled with a few union actions, an attempted coup, and a hurricane named "FENTON"), but thanks to the support of our growing family of fine advertisers, the positive recognition of our fellow film publications and the favorable letters from the public, here we are! Pertaining to publishing frequency, we should appear around every two months—about the middle to end of every other month—so this makes this the October/November 1989 issue, but it can be enjoyed anytime!

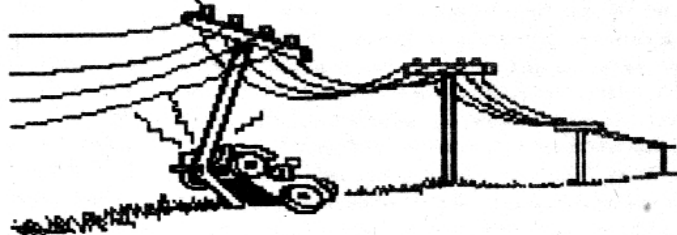
To the business at hand. What filmography of celluloid weirdness would ever be complete without many mentions of this issue's featured interviewee, **Herschell Gordon Lewis**? We tracked him down in sunny Florida where he's a successful direct-sales promoter, but also probably secretly awaiting funding for **Blood Feast III**! He is a very well spoken, intelligent man and the interview and accompanied story reflect this plus much more.

As you can see, we have upgraded yet again in our attempts to boldly go where no 'Zine has gone before, with a new **Glossy Cover** (wow!)! I know that this comes along with a new glossy price, but for just a buck, we're still one of the best bargains in town.

As mentioned in the editorials of the two previous issues, **Cinemaphobia** could always do with more writers/distributors/ advertisers, so, if you like what you see, drop us a line!

Shalom!  
  
Robert Carobene  
Editor

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# INTERVIEWS

## Herschell Gordon Lewis: The Wizard of Gore

by Richard Behrens

Photos from HG Lewis films courtesy Shock Films and Jim Maslon.

On a rain swept afternoon sometime in the mid-60's, my grandmother took me to Coney Island Beach where I cavorted on the boardwalk and watched the freak show; then we were off to a Brooklyn movie house to see a Planet of the Apes sequel. We arrived early, for the first feature was just about to go on the screen. It was **2000 MANIACS** by Herschell Gordon Lewis.

As a five year old, I did not know the name of the director, nor that he had achieved cult status as "The Wizard of Gore." I had only myself and the movie which was a hideous nightmare filled with amputated limbs, bloody axes, and sadistic hillbillies. I cried so much my grandmother, who was also shocked beyond belief, was forced to leave the theatre dragging me behind.

For two decades I play acted for my friends how the deranged goon took the young innocent girl into the woods and chopped her thumb off; then carried her back to town where a whole crew of his mentally diseased friends hacked her to bits with an axe. It had scared me so much, that even as a twenty-three year old college student, I hesitated to rent it on video. I told myself I was too old for such nonsense.

Then I read that the French director Jean-Luc Godard had a profound fondness for an American thriller called **2000 MANIACS**. In fact, it was his favorite film. This made things very different: a French intellectual had endorsed my guilty pleasure. I was off to the video store ready to see the film with fresh eyes. With today's proliferation of slickly produced slasher films, highlighted with grotesque and expensive special effects, it is hard to imagine the psychological impact that Lewis' gore pictures had on the public imagination. Unlike the recent overbudgeted Hollywood spectacles which are more entertaining than terrifying, an H.G. Lewis film leaves the viewer feeling decidedly unbalanced. One doesn't leave **BLOODFEAST** for instance, wanting to buy a Fuad Ramses t-shirt,



Herschell Gordon Lewis today.

but holding one's head as if there were an axe stuck in it.

What distinguishes the horror in a Herschell Gordon Lewis film is the primary importance of "fright over effect." In a typical contemporary horror film production, a man's head would expand, crack open, and his brains would turn into a huge eight-legged spider before your very eyes; but it would not necessarily terrify and alienate you. On the contrary, most viewers would be dazzled by the prosthetics and other amazing special effects. After seeing a Lewis gore film, however, you are haunted by the absurdly simple: a dead woman's wide open eyes or the jeering laughter of a deranged maniac.

One of the most effective themes he employed to further amplify the horror was mental illness. In contrast to a Dracula movie which would end with the count being stabbed through the heart and turning to dust, **THE GRUESOME TWOSOME** ends with the killers being locked away in a madhouse for the rest of their lives. The zombie hillbillies in **2000 MANIACS** do not shuffle about like George Romero's undead; they caper and cackle hysterically as if their brains had snapped a cable and the engines of their souls were short a quart or two. Nothing is more unsettling than the drooling lunatic laughs of Rodney Pringle (of **THE GRUESOME TWOSOME**) just before he slices off his victim's scalps for his mother's wig shop.

By comparison, a slasher like Freddie Krueger from the **NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET** films, seems like a defused bomb. Although he was once flesh and blood, he has been transformed into a supernatural dream goblin with no human motivation. Rodney Pringle, on the other hand, is clearly a product of his mother's mental disease. When she hands him, as a present for promising to be a good boy, an electric knife, we immediately recognize the sick relationship between child and parent that we've witnessed once too often in our own lives: the castrated son forever bound to his





Fuad prepares for the feast. **Blood Feast** (1963).

mother's twisted idea of love.

Another contributing factor to the films' unsettled atmosphere is, oddly enough, the low budget ineptitude and awkward frame compositions. Having almost no money to work with, Lewis went for the effect of a dark dream. Muddled sound, poor lighting, and an obsession with photographing people from the side—capturing either their profiles or the back of their heads—considerably alienates the viewer. We do not forget we are watching a movie, which happens during a Steven Spielberg action sequence; rather we are forced to see the seams and patches of the film process. The images become murky, distant, and, paradoxically, close to home. Even when the lunatic with the axe runs into frame, chopping off skulls in his wake, it still looks like a home movie, a domestic slice captured on a Kodak Instamatic.

When Fuad Ramses, the cannibal caterer in **BLOODFEAST**, runs across the front lawns of a middle-class Florida neighborhood, his gaudy theatrics (dragging leg and grimacing frown) and grotesque make-up (silver-painted hair and enlarged grease-paint eyebrows) stand in sharp contrast to the mundanity of the lawn sprinklers, parked cars, telephone poles and pedestrian-looking palm trees. We are reminded that only mental patients dress and act like that in the midst of a placid suburbia.

The films also hit deep chords because of their overuse of blood. Blood is what his films are all about. There is a ritualistic element to the bloodletting that is as disturbing as it is graphic. In **BLOODFEAST**, when the two detectives break into Fuad Ramses' catering hall and find a woman slashed to ribbons on his food preparation table, the camera gloats over the gore as if it were ready to devour her itself. Seeing blood is what the films are centered around, what they promise the voracious audience, and the plots are tailor-made to feature those prized moments.

Most of Lewis' murderers are killing to serve higher ends. Ramses is a devotee of Ishtar; the **2000 Maniacs** are celebrating their town's 100th anniversary; Adam Sorg (**COLOR ME BLOOD RED**) needs inspiration and color for his paintings; Montag the Magician (**THE WIZARD OF GORE**) claims to satiate his audience's bloodlust with stage illusions to prevent the horrors of gladiatorial stadiums. The violence is almost never random, but carefully controlled. It may be argued that the films themselves stimulate the audience to depravity, but the fact remains there is present in the human psyche a need to sublimate these impulses into meaningful patterns. The human sacrifice of the Aztecs were savage acts committed methodically by the priestly caste to create symbols of power, divinity, and plenitude.

Lewis' films became for 60's America a modern substitute for the ancient bloodletting rituals. The cinema had been liberated, its veins exposed, and life essence flowing. Something dark and alien in society was given free rein over the movie theatre screens and producers started to pump out their own ersatz-H.G. Lewis films by the dozen. As usual, the writhing victim on the altar of the high priest was a woman.

Feminists are correct in pointing out that Herschell Gordon Lewis is "morally indefensible." Women are treated as objects to mutilate and the camera gloats lustfully over their open wounds. But the relationship between the sexes is actually far more interesting than meets the eye.

For instance, females are invariably not only the victims but the aggressive forces behind the violence. Fuad Ramses of **BLOODFEAST** kills in the name of Ishtar, his thousand-year old goddess; Montag the Magician of **THE WIZARD OF GORE** turns out to be a phantasm conjured by a television anchorwoman; the murderer of **THE GORE GORE GIRLS** is a jealous stripper who envies the success of her fellow dancers; and Rodney Pringle of **THE GRUESOME TWOSOME** is a mindless deranged tool of his twisted mother.

This is not to say that woman must take the ultimate blame for their own degradation, but the men whose minds are being manipulated by idealized women (goddesses, mothers, television stars, etc.) are certainly reacting against their own humiliation. There is a pathos to Rodney Pringle's promise to his mother to be a good boy; or Fuad Ramses, trying to stand in the proud tradition of the Ishtar priesthood, now reduced to obtaining his victims through catering scams.

Many of Lewis' men are neurotically threatened by women. Abe Gentry of **THE GORE GORE GIRLS** is dashing and sophisticated, but he seems impervious to women and their alluring sexuality. He avoids them like the plague, insulting them with snide remarks, wagging his cane around in their faces as if it had strange phallic power, and trying hard to keep ace reporter Nancy Waxman in her place. His efforts are not so much the snap dash of a James Bond, but a highly insecure, probably homosexual, man with an intense fear of women's powers.



A victim of the **2000 Maniacs** (1964).



Kathy Baker of **THE GRUESOME TWOSOME** is also an interesting example. Her attempts to play amateur sleuth and solve the mystery of the missing co-eds puts a rift between her and her boyfriend. At a drive-in movie, he tries to make out with her, but her mind is elsewhere:

**KATHY:** Did you ever wonder what all these people in all these cars are doing?

**DAVE:** Nice thoughts for a young girl like you!

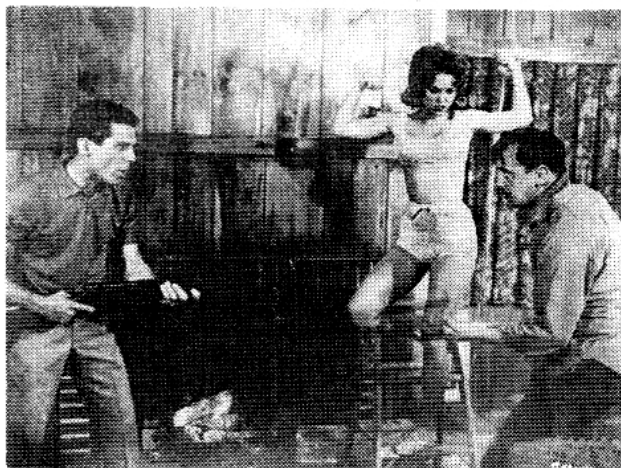
**KATHY:** I don't mean that! Honestly, Dave! Sometimes you say the worst things. What I mean is what are they doing with their lives? How do they think? Where do they live? I bet we're surrounded just this minute by fascinating people! Maybe a group of nuclear scientists relaxing at this movie before they plan the first trip to the moon! Or maybe a group of spies full of secrets to overthrow the government!

**DAVE:** Or maybe there's a guy whose absolutely out of his mind to make mad passionate love to his best girl! (THROWS HIMSELF ON HER).

Interestingly enough, the movie on the screen shows a woman trying to communicate passion to a lover who is only interested in drinking beer and eating potato chips. This curious role reversal points out that Lewis had more than degrading women on his mind: it remains a sad commentary on the rift between the sexes in a predominantly patriarchal age.

Of course, Lewis was out to terrify, not to socially inform. He not doubt had little concern for the feminist discourse other than disgust with the militant protestors outside the movie theaters (he parodied them quite bitterly in **THE GORE GORE GIRLS**). But it was his job to sell the image of women's blood to the audience he knew so well, frightened men. They demanded to see women sacrificed on the new priestly altar: the theatre screen.

In the end, it remains a matter of marketing. Herschell Gordon Lewis has spent most of his adult life in the marketing, advertising, and direct mail business. He remains, ultimately, a man



Artist as psychopath in **Color Me Blood Red** (1965).

who watches people, observes their behavior, and learns how to work beneath the surface. He is an expert on how to sell to people, whether it be movies or mail order products.

Lewis insists that he was making films for the audience, not the critics. This is because the critics were working on different levels of awareness than the weaker willed thrill seekers who would go into a theatre with the same brainlessness as teeny boppers during a roller coaster. So Lewis' stature as a film artist has never been an issue except for the handful of fanatics who insist on immortalizing every frame he ever exposed.

One can't help but wonder if there is any element of self-parody in his characters. Adam Sorg in **COLOR ME BLOOD RED** is a frustrated artist who can sell canvases with ease but could never impress the critics. "He is a commercial success," one outraged stuffed shirt announces, "but an artistic imposter!" So Adam decides to paint his canvases with the fresh blood of butchered females. Then, upon tripling the price of his work, he refuses to sell to prove his integrity.

It is hard to imagine Lewis tormented over failing to satisfy the critics, but he certainly suffered from the loss of more convincing special effects. Around him grew a thriving industry based on slaughter and he was becoming outmoded, pushed further into comedy and self-parody. With the collapse of his advertising agency in the mid-seventies, he was forced to sell the rights to all his films, thereby losing any artistic control over their marketing he ever possessed. He has not directed a movie since.

The film industry has certainly spawned strange broods in its time, and Herschell Gordon Lewis is one of the strangest. His films are an oddball conglomerate of sleazy exploitation, black humor, unfettered creativity and shameless commercialism. Lewis has given us films that terrify, amuse, outrage, and sicken. Rarely do they fail to move us, even if it is to condemn.

Now I know his name, now I have seen his movies with my eyes wide open like one of his corpses. It is hard to imagine that a man with a camera could create such deep scars as well as portray them in full blood color.



Montag the Magician. **The Wizard of Gore** (1970).



It would come as a surprise to the majority of his more steadfast critics as well as some of his most devoted fans that Herschell Gordon Lewis is an educated, articulate, and well-spoken man. He has authored more than a dozen books on mail order marketing and has become a respected lecturer who travels the world. He is affable, intelligent, and a strong talent in his chosen field. It is almost disappointing to find that he isn't as deranged as his 2000 maniacs!

His background is strictly corporate and academic. Starting as an English professor with a Ph.D. in psychology, he eventually wandered into the Chicago advertising world where he produced industrial and commercial films for private companies. It was the small studio he had established with producer David Friedman that later developed into Box Office Spectaculars, the highly commercial company that gave the world **BLOODFEAST** and **2000 MANIACS**.

His foray into cinema was by no means a coincidence or a sidetrack, for in films he found the perfect medium through which he could experiment with human response and manipulation. Like any good marketing man, Lewis would sit in a theater and watch people watch the film. He insists that he was making films for the audience, not for the critics.

CINEMAPHOBIA had the honor of speaking to the man for a brief but enjoyable conversation full of entertaining anecdotes, jabs at the film industry, and gossip about the fate of **BLOODFEAST 2**.

### GORE GENRE

**CB:** Recently, slasher and gore films have been tremendously popular and its been accepted that your films have had a large influence on what is going on today.

**HGL:** Influence is a strange term. We were certainly the fountainhead of films of this type. We started this whole genre of motion pictures. But in terms that Columbus influenced Columbus Ohio...there's certainly an indirect relationship.

**CB:** Do you see any distinctions between what you were trying to do and what's being done in these films today? I personally see a difference between Bloodfeast and something like a Nightmare on Elm Street movies.

**HGL:** You see, the evolution of this type of picture certainly has been predictable: from fright to effects. To give you an example take the original motion picture The Fly. That picture had elements of horror in it. Now we have a remake of The Fly with Jeff Goldblum, which I found ludicrous—actually a combination of ludicrous and disgusting—because the attention was on effects, not on horror.

**CB:** You're saying the quality of the fright in a movie like Bloodfeast is of a different type than the special effects in a Nightmare on Elm Street movie?

**HGL:** Bear in mind that when we made Bloodfeast, we had this compound, this stage blood which we had made in a little cosmetics laboratory in Coral Gables and some chicken skin. We didn't even use morticians wax until The Gruesome Twosome. Until then all we had was chicken skins and department store mannequins and even those weren't as refined as they are today. We began to sophisticate our effects to some extent, never could we have had prosthetic devices—one of those could have cost more than the entire movie. Now, I can't come into a movie and say to the audience, "Gee I'm sorry folks, but we didn't have a lot of money! Try to understand that these are primitive effects." No, I have to horrify them on a comparative level. I can't even consider having some alien creature bursting bloodily out of a man's chest. I can't even consider the skin being stripped off somebody's face. Mandibles were certainly far beyond budget. It has nothing to do with capability. Now I don't pretend that I wouldn't have loved to have those devices, but had I had them, they would have been subordinate to the horror. They are now in almost every instance, primary. And its parallel to having the background music be primary. That to me is the difference.



Four of the **2000 Maniacs** do their thing.

**CB:** What do you mean by Intensive Gore?

**HGL:** As opposed to Extensive Gore? Intensive Gore is when we concentrate on one body, as opposed to wiping out a whole bunch of people. Sam Peckinpah came into the business and went for extensive gore, when he would kill off a whole platoon with a whole bunch of exploding clothing. We always concentrated on one individual at a time.

**CB:** You think that's more frightening?

**HGL:** I think it is, positively. In fact, in direct marketing I always preach, talk to one person not to a group.

**CB:** How was the decision made to do gore?

**HGL:** The joint decision of my partner David Friedman and myself. In fact, what had happened was David and I had made a couple of nudie movies, none of which were notable, but the most profitable, because we had no partners, was LUCKY PIERRE (1961). Now its called THE ADVENTURES OF LUCKY PIERRE. It was the first bare breast film shot in 35mm.

**CB:** This was right before Bloodfeast.

**HGL:** Exactly. We had also made Daughter of the Sun and people



were hiring us to make that type of movie for them. Things were winding down and we didn't like the direction that those movies were taking. At the time we were living in Chicago and we loved to go to Florida to film and we were thinking of some reason to shoot a movie, and I didn't want to make any more of those nudies. So we cold bloodily made a list of the kind of motion pictures that the major companies couldn't make or wouldn't make. And gore in those days was different: never did a major company picture show anybody die with eyes open, never did they show mutilation. I would see these gangsters like Edward G. Robinson and they may have had a melodramatic end, but they always died quietly, eyes shut. And after they died with their eyes shut, no one came around pulling the eyeballs out of their head. So, gore was a natural target for us because we figured we could do it within our own budgetary proposition. Like science fiction movies, even then FORBIDDEN PLANET had broken the barrier of budget, and some of the contemporary television programs of the days were doing a better job on production than we could do, so we knew we couldn't compete in the area of production. In LUCKY PIERRE the crew was two people, I was the director and cameraman, Dave was the producer and sound man. As a matter of fact, on the synch, the actors had to work their own clapboard because we didn't have a third person to say, "Take Three Scene One." So there was no terrors left for me in the production technique. I knew how to make a fade on the Mitchell Camera, to make a wipe using Chlorox Bleach, things that nobody in his right mind would ever try. But this is the wonderful world of "make-do." So that plus our compounded stage blood...the decision was based on an investigation on an empirical level by the two of us, trying to figure out what we could make that a theater would play.

CB: But you did Bloodfeast so well in terms of gore horror, don't you think that there was something in you that was attracted to the genre of gore, that it wasn't just a pure marketing decision?

HGL: It was a pure marketing decision. The only type of picture I was really attracted to were the hillbilly pictures.

### BLOOD FEAST

CB: About the humor in Bloodfeast, was that intentional?

HGL: Absolutely! The guy's ground up into hamburger, and the wife says, "Oh dear, the guests will have to have leftovers for dinner!"

CB: It seems, in watching Bloodfeast, that in spite of the horror, the crew is having a lot of fun making the film.

HGL: Ah, that's the key! We've turned down actors or actresses in fear that we'd have personality problems on the set. We were a jolly band, no one felt bothered to work 18 hours a day and we'd go out to look at the dailies. We had a very good time shooting these movies. It's the kind of one-piece company you don't find these days.



Only the most tender morsels end up in Fuad's dishes. Blood Feast.

CB: What happened to Mel Arnold who played Fuad Ramses.

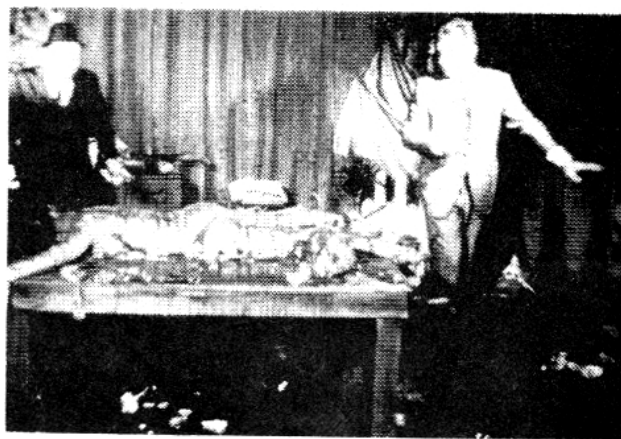
HGL: He's still around, he lives down here somewhere. He's now in the real estate business. He called me at the beginning of this whole revival of interest in my films and said if I was going to make Bloodfeast 2 he was certainly available.

CB: Is that an impetus to make the film?

HGL: Well, it's not really up to me. I'd say in the past five years I've had 3,418 phone calls suggesting Bloodfeast 2 and I said, Let me know when you're ready. It's all talk. People want to get their name in Variety or Film Daily and once that happens they lose interest in actually making the movie.

CB: So you're willing to make films but you're not willing to finance them yourself.

HGL: That is correct. I'll tell you why. When I made these movies,



Fuad Ramses' last catering job. Blood Feast.

my name wasn't worth more than zilch. I was just another schmuck with a camera. Now I feel if we make Bloodfeast 2 and my name is on it as director, that very fact will assure somebody of 1) some theatrical play 2) an absolute deal for video tape 3) probably a cable deal. And that for me is a worthwhile deal for negotiation.

CB: What would Bloodfeast 2 be about? How would you get Fuad Ramses out of the trash compactor.

HGL: I wouldn't go into the supernatural, I'd have his son come around.

CB: But Ramses was a couple of thousand years old, wasn't he?

HGL: No, the ritual was a couple of thousand years old. His age was unspoken. Then again, I wouldn't want to tailor the film to only those who saw Bloodfeast. We would capitalize on the publicity given to the original but the concept would be geared to the 1990's.

CB: Roger Corman's still producing, maybe he'd be interested.

HGL: There's an old saying. "If they want me, they know where to git me!" I'm certainly not hiding from anybody, but I'm not pounding the pavement saying, "Please make my picture, mister! Please make my picture!"

CB: I'm really surprised that someone hasn't pounced on you to make Bloodfeast 2.



A Pleasant Valley celebrant. 2000 Maniacs.

HGL: I admit to you that I'm a little surprised myself, but the world is full of surprises. And meanwhile I'm not starving.

CB: Let's say I was a film producer and I came to you and said, "Here's a million dollars, let's make a picture," would you?

HGL: Sure.

CB: Well, next time I get a million dollars...

HGL: Just mail it to me care of general delivery.

#### 2000 MANIACS

HGL: I was told last week by a German film critic that 2000 Maniacs is the favorite film of French Director Jean-Luc Goddard. It's also my own by the way.

CB: I saw it when I was a kid and I found it unsettling. All these years I thought it was the gore, but I saw it last year and the gore by today's standards is not too scary...

HGL: The gore in 2000 Maniacs is trivial compared to the gore in The Gore Gore Girls. There's an overriding sense of horror throughout that movie.

CB: Right, I see the shots of the hillbillies on the road and it really makes me feel unsettled. Because there was something mentally ill about these people.

HGL: Ah! Good...well, you see, you are one of us! And that is the difference, and that has nothing to do with budget. Now look at that remake of The Fly. Nothing had any emotional effect on the people sitting there in the audience! Zero! Zilch! Nada! Half of the people were convulsed, and they might go out admiring the effects, but they won't go out with the sense of doom that you had when you saw 2000 Maniacs.

CB: Those opening shots of the kids hanging the cat with the noose, that was off-balanced mentally.

HGL: (Laughs) It was a reflection of my own personality.

CB: About Bloodfeast and 2000 Maniacs, both films had a theme of ritual in it: the Ishtar feast and the sacrifice of the northerners. Was this intentional.

HGL: I think it just evolved that way, that was a peculiarity of plot line. The ritual is not parallel. But you are quite right and most astute in your analysis.

CB: Are you familiar with Shirley Jackson's The Lottery.

HGL: Yes, that is a classic of its own. That is very much in the same mode as 2000 Maniacs.

CB: You composed the title song for the movie, didn't you?

HGL: Sure, I'm a country and western nut. If someone said to me, who are your favorite composers, I would say Beethoven, Shostakovich and Chet Atkins. That's why I wrote that music in 2000 Maniacs, in fact it's my voice on the soundtrack. A couple of years ago they had a retrospective at the Variety Art Theatre in Los Angeles and then I was invited to be a guest at the Horror Film Festival in Milan Italy of all places. In both cases they screened 2000 Maniacs and in both cases the audience asked me if I would sing-song the verses from the song. Of course I did, and the odd thing is, when I started that in Milan about half the people there joined in. They had seen the movie so many times they knew the words in English. I found that very satisfying.



A rare photo of the assembled cast of 2000 Maniacs (note a more youthful HG Lewis on the far left).

#### WIZARD OF GORE

HGL: WIZARD OF GORE was a jinx picture. We loused the first three days shooting on the Mitchell Camera because one of the crew decided to repair the camera and he put it back together wrong. The first three days of shooting were all blurred, we didn't even know until we got the word from the lab, "Quick! Stop! Don't take another shot!" But we locked in with the original budget. Then we were about to shoot what I called The Ultimate Effect and we were kicked out of that location, never did shoot it. It was in my opinion a half-baked approach. But people like it.

CB: The Theatre de Grand Guignol seems to be present in The Wizard of Gore. Did you have any knowledge of that?



# FEATURES

## BROOKLYNWOOD?

by Ellen Levitt

In my senior year of high school, I was told by a friend that a movie was being filmed near her home. I biked over and Janet and I walked to a large house in Brooklyn's western Flatbush section where we watched the technical crew milling about a gaudy pink house. Then we saw a familiar-looking man tossing a football around with a young boy. When the man began walking toward Newkirk Avenue, we breathlessly followed him. He entered a trailer on Newkirk and we gingerly approached the window. Janet nearly chickened out but I found the courage to rap on the window and politely call out, "Mr. Kline?"

Kevin Kline, taking a break from filming the future Academy Award winner *Sophie's Choice*, was washing his face. But he came to the window and chatted with us for a few minutes. He even gave me his autograph on the front page of a social studies book—"Historically yours, Kevin Kline."

I had already been aware of some movies and TV shows that featured Brooklyn, but seeing the set and the stars of a major movie just a stone's throw from my own home in Brooklyn really fed my interest in this subject. Doing research and swapping stories with several Brooklynites over the years has helped bring about this article on Kings County's film history. Many movies from the early days of American film history through the present have been filmed entirely or partially in Brooklyn. Film production companies have been based in Brooklyn. Many actors, actresses, directors, and scriptwriters have grown up in Kings County. Brooklyn ain't Hollywood, true—but a vast, on-going chapter of American cinematic history has been, and will continue to be made here.

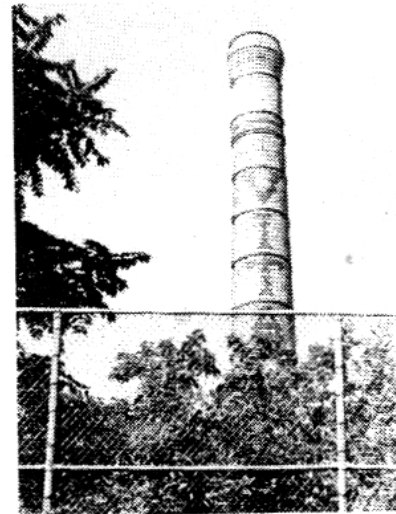
Let's look at the present before we hearken back. One of 1989's most controversial films was made entirely in Brooklyn. Spike Lee's *Do The Right Thing* chronicles an incident on a Bedford-Stuyvesant street during one of hottest day of the summer. It was actually filmed on Stuyvesant Avenue between Lexington and Quincy Street, not in a Hollywood lot. Neighborhood people watched with excitement as this movie was created.

Spike Lee's film production company is called Forty Acres And A Mule, and is probably the most visible film company in Brooklyn. But once upon a time the most visible movie firm in Brooklyn was a company called Vitagraph.

If you take the D or Q train to Brighton and look carefully before the train enters the Avenue M station, you will see a large smokestack of pale-salmon brick, Vitagraph spelled vertically in its side. Beyond it is a school for religious Jewish girls, the Shulamith School, that once served as Vitagraph headquarters. The son of the school's principal told me that virtually nothing remains in the school from Vitagraph days—for years the building lay vacant and anything worth taking is long gone. But if you walk about the complex, you can imagine that filming once flourished here. There is a broad courtyard, an expansive gate, and an NBC studio across the street—a studio that was the first home of *The Cosby Show*.

Vitagraph was one of the earliest and busiest companies of the silent-film era. It was founded by British immigrants J. Stuart Blackton and Albert Smith, who made their first flick in 1897 (*The Burglar on the Roof*). Joined by William Rock in 1899, the trio led Vitagraph through many strong years. They built studios at East 15th Street and Avenue M in 1905, and did both indoor and outdoor filming on the premises. They gathered together a troupe of regular actors and directors soon after.

The company at Avenue M was one of the most prolific companies at the time, but not many of their films are left today. Only one early Vitagraph film was copyrighted. A warehouse fire in 1910 destroyed most of the earlier films. However, some Vitagraph



The Vitagraph smokestack.

movies are housed in the Museum of Modern Art archives. Included are *Bathing Beauties And Big Boobs* (1918), *Bunny Dips Into Society* (ca. 1910), *Cohen At Coney Island* (1909), *A Cure For Pokeritis* (1912), *Her Choice* (1912) and *A Tale of Two Cities* (1911). Vitagraph conquered other classics besides *A Tale...—A Midsummer's Night Dream* (1906 and 1909), *Oliver Twist* (1909), *The Pickwick Papers* (1913) and *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1910) are accounted for. Blackton, Smith, and Rock were innovators as far as cinematography, company structure, animation (their first cartoon was released in 1906), and distribution (the first US studio to have a distribution office in Paris). Blackton brought famed cartoonist Winsor McCay ("Little Nemo") of the New York Herald to work on a Vitagraph cartoon of his character. Blackton also began "The Motion Picture Story Magazine" in 1911, as a promotional device for Vitagraph films and stars. Vitagraph stars made personal appearances at film screening. During its peak period, Vitagraph produced over 300 films a year from 1910 to 1920.



What becomes a legend!

Vitagraph was also a member of the Motion Picture Patents Company, a trust/patents monopoly that maintained (or tried to maintain) exclusive control over the US film market. These companies, like Vitagraph, paid royalties for the use of many Edison film-equipment patents. But this monopoly was struck down by the courts, and Vitagraph's competition greatly increased. The company was also hurt by Blackton's leaving to set up his own shop at 423 Classon Avenue, going north in Brooklyn. (He did return in 1923). But in 1925, due to competition and Smith's poor health, Vitagraph was bought by Warner Bros. Early experiments in sound film were conducted at the Brooklyn studios; most of the industry was in California by then.

In 1926 Warner Bros. workers made many short test films at Vitagraph (soon dubbed the Vitaphone system). One of the films was a speech by the venerated Dr. Watson of the telephone-creation legend! But these studios had detrimental problems such as the lack of accessibility for talent and crew; and noise from subway trains running right by (when a train passed, record needles jumped!)

While Vitagraph was the major force in Brooklyn filmmaking, other smaller "independents" also were active. Among those involved was Fred Balshofer, who began his Brooklyn-based Crescent Film Company in 1908. He hired a local teen, Arthur Miller, to help develop film. Miller's responsibilities at Crescent grew and years later this training helped him win three Oscars for movie photography. Balshofer also connected with Herman Kolle, whose father owned Prospect Hall (273 Prospect Avenue, off the Prospect Expressway). Parts of the hall were used as Crescent's open-air studio. They made a tiny lab and bought a used Pathe camera. Crescent also filmed at Coney Island and Steeplechase amusement park. But Crescent was short-lived, due to an investigation by the Edison company involving patent royalty infringement. One Crescent film was *Young Heroes Of The West*. Much of it filmed at the Dyker Heights golf course on 69th Street.

After Crescent went out of business, they formed the New York Motion Picture Company, at 17th st. between 7th and 8th avenues. Still outside of the Motion Picture Patents Company trust, this little firm struggled along. Using the Sheepshead Bay waterfront as a backdrop, NYMPC made *A Fisherman's Romance*. Brooklyn companies also snuck over to the wilds of Staten Island and New Jersey to do their filming.

Once Hollywood became America's film capital, Brooklyn took a definite back seat--it was economically unworkable to stay in Kings County. However, Brooklyn and her natives often popped up in films over the years. In the 30's and 40's Brooklyn was often

recreated on a movie lot; but there are a host of films with parts actually filmed in Kings County. We finally come full circle to Spike Lee, with his home-grown *She's Gotta Have It* and *Do The Right Thing*.

No less than Cecil B. DeMille directed *Saturday Night* (1922), a silent at Coney Island. King Vidor's *The Crowd* was partly filmed at Coney Island, too. Films featuring the borough often were comedies, crime films, or studies of performers. All these were populated with enough rough-and-tumble caricatures (i.e. stereotypes) to irk even the most pacific of Brooklynites. Would you believe that *A Tree Grows In Brooklyn* grew on a Hollywood set? But in the early 1950's movie makers saw the light and returned to filming on location more often than previously. A Brooklyn-made film started this cycle--*Little Fugitive*, about a young boy at Coney Island.

Well, as we all know, the film industry in it's infinite funding is once again splashing around the New York area, with films in constant production all around the Big Apple, including the great county of Kings. Of course, Brooklyn is not the type of place to leave all the accolades afforded America's film starts to the Hollywood Walk of Fame when so many of "Hollywood's Finest" hailed from Brooklyn. You can see some of these folks' names on tile leaves in the Brooklyn Botanic Gardens own Path Of Stars. Sure, you may have known that Woody Allen, Mel Brooks, and Jackie Gleason are Brooklyn bred; would you believe William Daniels (thus, a pseudo-New Englander!) is from Brooklyn? Also count in John Amos, Chuck Connors, Richard Dreyfuss, Louis Gosset Jr., Emil Jannings, Phil Silvers, Rod Steiger, and Ben Vereen. Add Shirley Booth, Ruby Dee, Susan Hayward, Mary Tyler Moore, both Barbra Streisand and Stanwyck, Mae West, Jessica Walter... and directors Sidney Lumet, Paul Mazursky, Mos Hart...

So in retrospect, the defection of "Dem Bums" to become the Los Angeles Dodgers was not the first time that the West Coast tried to make off with something distinctly New York, but at least the movie biz still exists and yet may flourish in what could have been America's fourth largest city as well as "Hollywood" East: Brooklyn!

END



Grand Prospect Hall.



# NY Film Festival: One Filmmaker's View

by Jesus Pagan

Every year, the wrinkled purple banner on Broadway is a signpost which guides the unwary to the New York Film Festival box office at Lincoln Center. Upon arrival, the uninitiated sadly find that most of the films are sold out. Although it is disappointing not to have the privilege of viewing films in the beautifully appointed Alice Tully Hall, this feeling wanes about a week after the Festival when most of the films are out in the theaters.

"What makes the New York Film Festival special?," you may be wondering. Do they make an effort to discover new talent? No, they show films made by people that are already recognized. Do they show films of unusual lengths that would have difficulty in theatrical release? No, the films are the standard features with a few shorts thrown in which are not publicized. Does the festival bring together the film community in New York with special events? No, they just show films, most of which are sold out before the tickets are available to the public.

So what is the point of the New York Film Festival, which is hyped as the "best" film festival west of Cannes? It is an opportunity for the "festival darlings" and their mistresses to gather and pay homage to the genius they all believe they possess.

The most glaring example of this was the press screening of Jim Jarmusch's new film, **Mystery Train**. Three separate groups of characters have encounters with the "spirit" of "THE KING" in Elvis' hometown of Memphis. Isn't Elvis kitsch a bit played out? A fine performance by the beautiful and talented Youki Kudoh in the first section of the film does hint towards Jarmusch's former panache, the bit with Rockets Redglare (which, as usual, is too short) and the appearances of Screamin' Jay Hawkins in the last section perks thing up, but the film just doesn't work. I dozed off, the person next to me was out cold and as I looked around the theater, I became aware of a growing and steady symphony of yawns.

When the lights came up and the press conference was to begin, I was curious how this audience would respond to Jarmusch's turkey. The stage became crowded with Jarmusch and about ten of his closest friends including Joe Strummer, John Lurie and Rockets Redglare. The entourage was brought ashtrays and proceeded to chain smoke while I, the poor schmuck that had sat there for almost two hours already, dared not light up in the audience.

The assembled critics and distributors were like the crowd in "The Emperor's New Clothes," except that, unfortunately, there were no daring enough "children" present (I humbly admit that I, too, am over the age of eighteen!). All that took place was the usual pretentious drivel which was only slightly less boring than the movie.

I saw **Stranger Than Paradise** five times. I saw **Down by Law** twice. Jarmusch's "near boring" deadpan style worked in these well thought-out and personal films. With **Mystery Train**, it is obvious that he had too much of a yen to spend money he got from Japanese investors as quickly as possible! What a waste.

On the other hand, **Roger and Me**, director Michael Moore's dark comedy about the closing of General Motor's auto plants in Flint, Michigan (resulting in the loss of 30,000 jobs), threatens to be one of the most important films of this decade. **Roger and Me** premiered at the Telluride Film Festival and won the People's Choice award at the Toronto Film Festival of Festivals. This audience of critics and distributors, probably the most jaded audience one can imagine, was rolling in the aisles. Moore, former executive editor of Mother Jones Magazine (he was fired because of his refusal to go along with the publisher's plans to make the magazine more mainstream), humorously expresses what is killing the American Dream.

Moore grew up in Flint and presents archival footage of the



Jim Jarmusch's **Mystery Train**.

city in the glory days he remembers as a child. Workers cheer on the management of General Motors in celebration of America's symbol of post-war prosperity—the automobile. These images take on the tragic irony of a mortician's funeral as we experience the painful death of the City of Flint. But, as Stanley Kubrick accomplished in **Dr. Strangelove**, Moore brings levity to the most desperate of scenarios.

The title, **Roger and Me**, refers to Roger Smith, Chairman of General Motors, whom Moore chases around throughout the film in an attempt to wake him up to the hardships he is inflicting on the city of Flint. Of course, Roger couldn't car less. As unemployment skyrockets and Flint begins to take on the pallor of the South Bronx, vain attempts are made to create new jobs and businesses. Taco Bell gets into the act and begins a training program for the former auto workers to learn how to assemble Taco Bel Grande's as opposed to Buick Le Sabres! The project fails because, according to Taco Bell's articulate manager, the auto workers just couldn't adapt to the exciting fast paced world of fast food! Elsewhere in the film, other bits of "post-GM" life in Flint are highlighted, such as the woman

selling rabbits advertised by a sign reading "Pets or Meat", or "Fred", a very busy man on the payroll of the Sheriff's office who, with a smile on his face, wakes people up in the morning to inform them that they are being evicted.

When Flint's crime rate becomes the highest in the U.S. and Money Magazine rates the city as the worst place to live in North America, attempts to boost the cities' image run rampant. The towns' celebrities, such as favorite son Bob Eubanks (former host of *The Newlywed Game*), come home to Flint to try to add a few silver linings. Outrageously expensive tourist attractions are constructed, but fail to bring in the projected millions of tourists they were built to achieve.

Michael Moore strongly stated in the press conference that *Roger and Me* isn't just about Flint, it is about the very dangerous trend towards polarization of the middle class which threatens the very foundation of America. He also points out that *Roger and Me* will never be seen in Flint. "Why," I wondered. "Censorship? Roger's influence?" Neither. There are no more movie theaters in Flint.

Atom Egoyan's *Speaking Parts* is preceded a soporific short film by Paul Glabicki *Under the Sea*. This short represents my worst fears about the kind of pointless junk that a festival can be capable of programming. Endlessly repeating, badly animated images of waves intercut with quotes from highbrow literature and other monotonous animation. It's supposed to tell a story of an ongoing voyage, but it tells nothing.

Egoyan's film, when it finally came on the screen, was nothing less than haunting. Mixing the mediums of film and video for affect, Egoyan successfully tells a tale of narcissism and manipulation. Three of the actors, Michael McManus, Arinee Khanjain and Gabrielle Rose, look so much alike that it can take a moment to

figure out which one is on screen. This film isn't likely to turn up at a theater near you, but when it is released, it's worth seeing (especially if you like *Sex, Lies and Videotape*)

Shohei Imamura's *Black Rain* is a painful Ozu-like film that looks at the bombing of Hiroshima through the eyes of one family affected by the blast. Although the film has been criticized by for not depicting the destruction of Hiroshima graphically enough, I didn't have much of a problem with that. If anything, I felt this film was less successful with its' message than Stanley Kramer was with *On the Beach*, where the aftermath of a nuclear war was displayed with no scenes of destruction at all. The power in both these films comes from the personalization of a holocaust and its' effect on the everyday lives of average people.

Krzysztof Kieslowski's *A Short Film About Killing* is a feature film about a homicidal psychopath and a bleeding-heart lawyer. A sick little film worth seeing.

These are the films that I saw at the New York Film Festival only because I was lucky enough to go to the press screening where the theater is more than half empty. Maybe you'll have the "honor" of attending these posh Alice Tully Hall screenings next year. If you're a filmmaker, maybe they'll bump one of their "darlings" turkeys to make room for your new film. Don't hold your breath!

Jesus Pagan, an independent filmmaker from *The Bronx*, is currently working on a docu-drama about the 1919 Malbourne Street Subway disaster. He is still seeking funding, but would rather spend his time talking with his pet cat "Pookie" than potential investors (feline, human, or otherwise!)

END



Michael Moore directs "Flint's Finest" in *Me and Roger*.



# The DEATH of the FILM FORUM?



MOVIE  
HOUSES

by  
Conrad  
Stoddard



Twilight of an institution.

On September 4, 1989, a great sadness filled the hearts of film lovers all over the New York area as the beloved **Film Forum**; one of the few remaining repertory/art film theaters left in Manhattan, closed its door forever to make way for the wreckers ball and yet another faceless metropolitan office spire.

Opened in 1970, designed to be a place of alternative film viewing highlighted by the exhibition of first or second run films of great interest, particularly independent shorts and fascinating Third World films, the Film Forum on Watts Street in lower Manhattan began to garner a regular crowd of diehard fans. The steadfast devotees of the modestly appointed theater were regularly offered film fare running the gamut from Brazilian and Chilean epics to retrospectives from the "canisters" of such film luminaries as Ed Wood Jr. (creator of the legendary **Plan Nine From Outer Space**) to simply awful atomic "bug" movies from the 1950's, and, of course, the venerated **Porky Pig Film Festival**. If "eclectic" is one of those very overused words this decade, we must break the barriers of good taste to apply it wholeheartedly to the kind of programming that was available at the Film Forum; a kind of programming that will be sorely missed.

I just happened to be on hand for the last day of regular operation of the Film Forum as a theater. The show in the second and larger of its two theaters featured something called **Twilight of the Cockroaches**. I had never heard of this one before and figured it would be some radioactive roach flick from 1954 starring Huntz Hall, but the surprise of the day was that this recently made Japanese film by director Hiroaki Yoshida was, indeed, about the twilight of a hardy group of cockroaches who were in a valiant struggle against their maniacal protagonists, who committed unthinking genocide on our little 6 legged friends on a daily basis just because of their small, insect-like appearance: Humans!

This was a terrific film, mixing the finest of Japanese animation with live action sequences of the human "villains"--this flick had more pathos, feeling and amusing action than any film I'd seen in a long time!

I don't want to digress into a film review here, but that's just a small sample of the kind of films New Yorker's are not going to see because some people think its more important to have another goddamn office building clogging up the skyline of Manhattan than a nice theater where you can see a fun film about oriental cockroaches!

"It's very upsetting to see the theater close," said Rick the Manager of the Film Forum as he slid down the ladder, probably for the last time, after placing a message on the marquee bidding the patrons of the theater a fond farewell. He then added "We're confident that all the money necessary will be raised to rebuild."

Yes, film fans, this story may have a happy ending after all. The management of the Film Forum, in conjunction with help from groups such as the National Endowment for the Arts, film notables such as Woody Allen, Milos Forman and Martin Scorsese, and private donations have begun the arduous task of raising the \$1.7 million that will be needed to build the New Film Forum, slated to open sometime during the spring of 1990 on West Houston Street.

"We already have about half the money needed," said Film Forum Program Director Bruce Goldstein, "and we're confident that we'll get the rest of the money so we can open on schedule."

The new facility on west Houston will boast three screens; two reserved for continuously changing programs as was the philosophy behind the original Film Forum, and one additional screen to hold over any films from the other two theaters that are very popular. The only suggestion I would have to the management of the Film Forum

is that as a movie theater maven, I really think it would add greatly to the ambiance of the new theater if they practice the time-honored rite of selling popcorn instead of boring, expensive "healthy" nut and fruit concoctions (generally found right next to diabetes-inducing "quadruple" fudge brownies!). Not that butter-drenched popcorn would be any better for the human constitution mind you; the snack stuff was a bit steeply priced overall.

Many New Yorkers (as well as film people everywhere) hope that the New Film Forum becomes a reality, and although \$850,000 is a good start, getting another \$850,000 will probably be no cake walk! If you are reading this and support the kind of programming offered by theaters like the Film Forum, no matter where you live, you may want to send a small donation (or maybe just a letter of support) to:

FILM FORUM BUILDING CAMPAIGN  
57 WATTS STREET  
NEW YORK, NY 10013

(Make checks payable to: The Moving Image, Inc.)

If you just won your local state lottery or you're just one of those rich generous types, there are some nice honors if you donate alot, so you might want to give Karen Cooper (Director of the save the Film Forum effort) a call at (212) 431-1592.



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END

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# INDIES

## John Saffron's IN A PIG'S EYE by Robert Carobene

When most people think of New York independent filmmakers, their heads would usually fill with visions of dark, scurrying figures; darting from location to lab to editing room with footage documenting some social cause or new impressionist dance routine. High atop a West side apartment building, director John Saffron, who has just finished his first feature, *In a Pig's Eye*, doesn't quite fit that stereotype. Well...almost.

*In a Pig's Eye* is kind of a strange little number that is hard to put a finger on at first glance, much to the amusement and chagrin of its' creator. Set in an off kilter tropical resort hotel (really Jersey City), *IAP* tells the tale of misdoings and chicanery during the preparations for a pro-smokers convention sponsored by the tobacco industry. Wild explosions of color and vibrating, beating tropical music bombards the doings in this quasi-Preston Sturges-meets-Paul Bartel comedy of errors where 30's buffoonery and zaniness meet 80's nightmarish neurosis and health consciousness. Marion Seldes plays Mrs. Purvis, the tobacco industry representative who is either in a tizzy over imagined anti-smoking conspiracies or eating cigarettes to calm herself down. David Canary, a regular on the ABC soap opera *All My Children* is on hand as Dr. Huntoon, the narcoleptic, bigamist hotelier who is more concerned with the image of the Hotel Copacabana than the welfare of his son/bellboy (Tudor Sherrard), who is just out of jail for strange food experiments and is vainly trying to save the life of his pet pig, who is meant for the tobacco conventions main course. He is aided by house maid Rosemary (Alexa Lambert), who in reality is the daughter of Mrs. Purvis and on hand to spy on the potential but imagined anti-tobacco terrorist.

"People in art end of the business call it a commercial film while people in the commercial end call it art," laments Saffron while comfortably seated in his living room. "This is kind of an oversimplification, but it seems to be the case." Being the kind of film *IAP* seems to be, this assessment may be pretty close to the mark. The plot would be a pretty standard one, if this was 1933, but with a cast of characters that contain everything from obsessed taxidermists, neurotics with strange sleep disorders, paranoid chain-smokers, synthetic food experiments and conspiratorial politicians—all you would need is a few drag queens and an egg-eating old woman and you have a John Waters film (which, coincidentally, is something *IAP* has been compared to, sort of)!

That's the precise problem Saffron has with his film—comparisons that try to go all the way, but fall short of the mark. Watching *IAP*, you get an uneasy feeling that there's something much darker just below the surface of the tight angular hallways of



Alexa Lambert and Tudor Sherrard try to save the main courses' life in *In a Pig's Eye*.

the rainbow-festooned Hotel Copacabana, but it just won't rear its' ugly head and barf its' greeting out to the world. *IAP* is just too clean, too white bread. Sure, the anti-smoking angle is a great touch (Saffron is a vegetarian and an avid anti-smoker), but with so much raw material on hand, how could a few dismemberments or vomiting sequences hurt?

Instead of highlighting what could have been done, let's look at accomplishments and motivations. Saffron has an interesting background for a New York independent filmmaker. Born in Oregon, Saffron knew from the start that the movie biz would be his biz.

"My life as a child really revolved around films and going to the movies," he reminisced. "When I was growing up, the story was that I wanted to be a lawyer, which really meant I wanted to be Perry Mason. When the time came to actually go to law school, I realized that that wasn't what I wanted." After several stints as a teacher, first in California and then in New York, Saffron started to write for the television soap operas and eventually became head writer for CBS' *As The World Turns*. With the filmmaking bug still unsquashed, he began his directorial career with *Living Arrangements*, a 15 minute film which won an award and pushed Saffron further into the world of film, and away from the soaps. But, how far away from the soaps?

Canary is from the soaps, as is David Bailey (the crooked Senator). And, the lurid color scheme harks more to "soapy" technicolor, and the plot is sufficiently convoluted (ever try to actually follow the plot of a soap operas?). This isn't necessary something that would taint *IAP*; instead it kind of realigns the sensibilities of one medium for another, which happens to be slightly off-track, but still wholesome enough to be sponsored by Proctor and Gamble.

In the final analysis, a correct summationary statement would be that if John Waters were to be directing soap operas, they would look very much like *IAP*, which would warm the heart of even the most jaded of midnight film aficionados.

The problem with distribution for Saffron and his prodigal child should really not be, and I feel will not continue. I put **IAPE** up there with last year's **Mondo New York**, something that may make us cynical east coast "filmophiles" shift around in our seats once or twice, but would really give most of the rest of the country a run for its' 6 bucks. No matter what, I hope **IAPE** finds its' way into your local video emporium. Call it a Protestant **Blue Velvet** or a "PG" **Pink Flamingos**, but **IAPE** does exist in this universe, and so does a very promising and diligent new director named John Saffron.

END

# LOVEDOLLS SUPERSTAR b.y. Mārc̣. ḷ. Wḥiñstōñ.

It's been a while since the Lovedolls broke up. So what have these former rock'n'roll superstars been up to? Kitty Carry-All is a vagrant and Bunny Tremeloe is very dead. But Patch Kelly has done considerably better. Taking the name Patch Christ, she has parlayed her popularity into a religious cult whose adherents will do anything for her without question ("What's wrong with killing your parents for rock'n'roll?" she asks at one point).

As **Lovedolls Superstar**, director David Markey's sequel to **Desperate Teenage Lovedolls**, begins, Patch and Kitty chance to meet. After some discussion they decide to reform the band and climb their way back to the top of the rock world. Bunny may be dead but guitarists are a dime a dozen. There are a few problems to be dealt with. Record executives have decided that the LoveDolls are has-beens, their fans are killing anyone who doesn't like them. Tanya Hearst's mother and boyfriend have joined forces to avenge Tanya's death (Patch killed her in **DTL**). As if that weren't enough, Johnny Tremaine's hippy twin brother Rainbow is also in town looking for vengeance.

An important point to make is that **Lovedolls Superstar** shows a vast improvement over **DTL**. The picture and sound quality are much better and one doesn't have to struggle to hear the dialogue or follow the plot. Added to this is the fact that the acting is much better. The best example of this is Steve McDonald. Miscast as Johnny Tremaine in **DTL**, Steve has redeemed himself with an excellent performance as Rainbow (though he does change his moniker with the declaration, "I used to be a rainbow. Now I'm bacterial warfare."). His narrations are among the best parts of the movie. Janet Houseden and Jennifer Schwartz, repeating their roles as Patch and Kitty are also better now than they were in the original, as is Hilary Rubens who plays the ghost of Bunny Tremeloe. This is not to say that all the acting is good. There are lapses (particularly by the supporting cast). But they're easily overlooked.

Another good aspect of the movie is the humor displayed. This is most evident in the Bruce Springsteen parody (a classic scene), although it is prevalent throughout. Listen for the muzak version of "Steppin' Stone," or the hardcore cover of "Sunshine Day" (which some may recognize from **The Brady Bunch**). There's also some great dialogue to appreciate ("The dudes on the moon are stoned foxes.")

Equally amusing is that on direct order of the President of the U.S. (who's a big Lovedolls fan), the lovedolls are encouraged to quell the lustful bloodthirstiness of their fans in similar fashion to the way Rev. Jim Jones dealt with his faithful some 10 years ago. This recognition of modern-day psychotics is replayed in other parts of the film as well. The parallelism between "Patch Christ" and good ol' Charly Manson and his "family" is the most prominent example.

Seeing the first Lovedolls movie first will help with seeing **LS**, but it's not necessary. This second film can stand on its own. **LOVEDOLLS SUPERSTAR** is available from **WE GOT POWER FILMS**, 3017 Santa Monica Blvd. #314, Santa Monica, CA, 90404 for \$22.50 ppd.

END

# No Such Thing As Gravity

by  
Robert Carobene

I recently had the pleasure of attending a special screening of New York Director Alyce Wittenstein's latest film, **No Such Thing As Gravity**, which continues with the quest she started with **Betaville**; that of mixing science fiction fantasy with sharp political commentary.



Steve Robinson and Holly Adams toil for the LaFont Corporation in **No Such Thing As Gravity**.



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The 45 minute film opens with the world owned by a large corporation which gauges the value of individuals by how many products they buy or how much make-up they put on their faces. All those considered "undesirable", such as school teachers who have been effectively replaced by machines, are exiled to an artificial planet called "Nova Terra", where they can exist without all the "comforts" (such as machines that automatically dress people) that most earthers have come to expect.

Nick Zedd plays Adam Malkonian, counsel for the defence and champion of the "little" guy, who himself gets exiled because of the disdain he displays in court toward the course society had taken. He finds no comfort in his relationship with Kay Zorn (Holly Adams), who is a top researcher for the LaFont Corporation, as well as being well entrenched in the values and mores present. Instead, he meets with and eventually falls in love with the Nova Terra ambassador (Emmanuelle Chaulet), who gives him a personal tour of the "horrible" planet, which turns out to be a greener, more vibrant, and kinder place than the grey, cold Earth could ever hope to be.

Zedd, controversial filmmaker responsible for the "Cinema of Transgression" is really breaking typecast by playing the compassionate yet unwavering lawyer Malkonian, and plays the role in a very convincing, low-key fashion. Chaulet, star of Eric Rohmer's *Boyfriends and Girlfriends*, plays effectively against Zedd as the seductive ambassador bent on saving her planet. Amusingly enough, the tyrannical Andreas LaFont is played by Fred Wittenstein, the directors father, and practically steals the show with his avaricious depiction of a twenty-first century robber-baron! And, rounding out the cast, Taylor Mead (star of Andy Warhol's *Lonesome Cowboys*) is hysterical as the bilious judge who sits high in the air while he dictates whether an individual is of value to society; replete with quivering nostril hair and flapping jowls.



Emmanuelle Chaulet looks on as Nick Zedd contemplates the fate of the human race in *No Such Thing As Gravity*.

After seeing Wittenstein's *Betaville*, I was very impressed with economy she used to make a big statement in such a small, unassuming way. The problems of gentrification and shallow people with shallow lifestyles perpetuating it are no strangers to either Wittenstein's work or the city which she works and lives in. Without redundancy, pomposity or didacticism, she once again addresses such distressing problems with finesse, style, and a good sense of humor.

Passion seems to be a key element in the filmmaking style of Wittenstein, and not just in a face value human relationship sense, but in a larger societal sense. Both her films emote a kind of desperate plea to wake up and take a hard look at what's going on in the way of social decay and institutionalized decadence. It's obvious that Wittenstein is not just following a trend to make films dealing with issues that are popular just to give the air of relevancy. The fact that she really cares about the world around herself cannot be ignored.

END

# Two Boneheads

by

## Robert Carobene

"Being buried alive by your best friend is a bummer." This is the tag line of Matthew Harrison's *Two Boneheads*, which captures a slice out of the relationship between two old friends who have either in the past or attempt in the present the actual burying of one another, in a manner or speaking.

Filmed in 16mm black and white, complimented nicely by the gritty streets of lower Manhattan where a bulk of the production took place, *Two Boneheads* functions on several levels at once. The more obvious theme of revenge is examined as we witness a reunion between two old friends during the time between connecting flights at a local airport. Seth (Evan Brenner), a yupped-out frustrated businessboy is wary of his beer-drinking, "blue-collared" friend Desmonds' (Christopher Grimm) offer to leave the airport for a tete-a-tete over burgers and fries in a lower Manhattan restaurant. Putting the fears of missing his flight aside, Seth relents and joins his friend on a nightmarish journey into the underbelly of New York, a trip planned previously by Desmond who was still haunted by the memory of being buried up to his neck in sand at a beach by Seth some years back, and just left there for a time to contemplate the rising tide.

Seth misses his flight, gets trapped in New York, cavorts in a drunken stupor on a subway car much to the glee of his scheming friend, and ends up being dragged in an alcoholic coma by Desmond, who is not savoring the delightful taste of revenge as much as he was earlier. Why is Desmond now reticent in his jubilation over destroying his friends life? Because both their lives were kind of shattered to begin with. Both have relationship problems; Desmond being kicked out of his girlfriend's apartment, Seth seeking out his ex-fiancee to salvage whatever was possible. Both are in jobs that strangulate their



Evan Brenner as Seth (left) and Christopher Grimm as Desmond in Matt Harrison's *Two Boneheads*.

minds, either a job in a machine shop or a corporate stooge in some multinational conglomerate. So, in his attempts to bury Seth and abandon him as it was done to him, Desmond realizes that they're both in a hole with dirt pouring in from all sides.

Matthew Harrison is in a growing congregation of young urban filmmakers who use New York and it's trappings to represent and amplify the angst felt by a generation of people who work in jobs they despise, breath air they can slash with a machete, and suffer from over 150 years of industrial horrors. Seth and Desmond represent every man or woman who bide their time as prisoners in a world with no hopes for parole, and the resulting neurotic impulses that flood their lives. It's not enough that they're being buried by the world, they have to gain whatever control they can muster and bury themselves. The salvational message in *Two Boneheads* is that toward the end, Desmond realizes his error, the friends confront their actions, and life seems a little more bearable.

Harrison accomplishes much in the 27 minute running time of *Two Boneheads*. This can be attributed to a very funny, tightly written script, sharp editing and well-paced action. The musical score by Danny Brenner is also complimentary to the production with it's bouncy, urban beat.

TWO BONEHEADS IS AVAILABLE FOR \$20 PLUS \$2.50 POSTAGE FROM: MATTHEW HARRISON FILMS, 160 EAST 3RD STREET # 4G, NEW YORK, NY, 10009.

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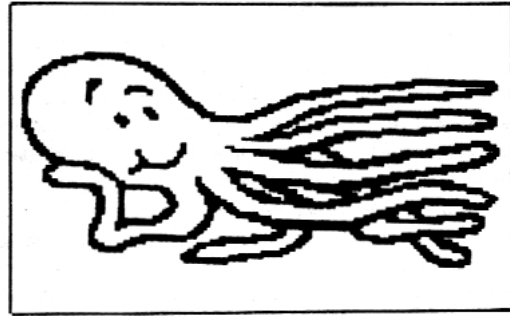
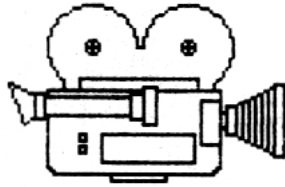


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## THE ABYSS by Sheldon Blake

**The Abyss** is a film that no doubt will fascinate and astound—a haunting and beautiful action epic about adventures beneath the sea. Released in the wake of a flurry of advertising about the unusual conditions under which it was made, the film's biggest triumph is that it was made at all. The ethereal special effects and extraordinary recreation of life in an underwater oil rig were brought to life by the ruthless determination of writer-director James Cameron.

Although the plot revolves around contact between human beings and alien life forms living on the ocean floor, the primary thrill of **The Abyss** are the pulse-pounding action sequences and dramatic conflicts between the union oil riggers and the paranoid military psychos. The film is not so much about the extraterrestrial (who take up very little screen time) but the effect of the underwater solitude on the psyche's of the very fragile humans.

The beauty of the film revolves around select sequences that are breath taking and memorable: a painfully graphic drowning, a terrifying depiction of a submarine wrecking on underwater rocks, a lone diver's descent to the ocean's floor to recover a sunken nuclear warhead. The film could have been made without the extraterrestrials in the plot and it would have been stunning.

James Cameron's film are strict action and adventure, but he never misses the subtleties of the human drama. Kyle's search for his mother in *The Terminator* and Ripley's wounded conscience in *Aliens* is matched here by the love between the two lead characters (Ed Harris and someone else), a separated husband and wife whose torn relationship is resurrected, not by sentimental plot trimmings, but by their discovery of the awesome power of love in the terrifying blackness of the abyss.

The details of the making of the film itself almost equal the action on screen in scope. Cameron, wanting the natural effect of a full-scale mock-up of an underwater installation, actually had such a set constructed in an unused cooling tower of an abandoned nuclear power plant project in North Carolina. After the set was completed, millions of gallons of salt water were pumped in to recreate a true-to-life undersea drilling venture.

END

One of Harris' stunt doubles in *The Abyss*

## MILLENNIUM by Q. Winston Brockmoore

It's a thousand years from now and the ecology nuts were right. Through our self-indulgence, we've all but destroyed the planet. As a result, life is a bleak, metallic nightmare where resources are so few and far between that only the most essential parts of the human body are allowed to live, so some of our future progeny must be encased behind glass tubing to prevent their dissected guts from drenching the surroundings. The clincher, however, is that humans can no longer reproduce. For this reason, there is a specially-trained team of people who go back in time to the twentieth century and rescue would-be victims of airplane crashes. Replacing them with specially-constructed duplicates (so the crash-sight will look natural), these time-commandos escort these people back with the hopes of re-seeding the human race in an even more remote future time.

The catch is that they have to avoid altering the course of history—such changes cause paradoxes and "timequakes" which rock the world of the thirtieth century. Great pains must be taken to make sure that those who will survive stay on the plane, that the crash takes place as it should.

One of these commandos, played by a pretty well-preserved Cheryl Ladd, must go back to recover a stun-gun which one of her colleagues dropped during a mission. That's easier said than done, as it was recovered by a scientist (a not-so preserved Daniel J. Travanti) who somehow figured out what's going on. In the course of events, she must go back and seduce Kris Kristofferson, an FAA crash investigator who has a piece of another stungun. She's confused because he found it after he met her, yet she met him before he found it (Time travel. Remember?).

If that last sentence confuses you, then be warned. **Millennium** is sometimes hard to follow. We start with Kristofferson's view, then shift to Ladd's. This causes confusion because she first meets him on a trip back in time. After returning to her own time she discovers

that she has to go back to a slightly earlier time for the seduction. Thus when he is meeting her for the first time, she is meeting him for the second, and much of what the viewer saw is shown again through different angles -- with some new details thrown in.

**Millennium** deserves credit for focusing on the paradoxes caused by time travel. The topic has been addressed by other movies and television shows, but never as carefully. Unfortunately, the movie still falls into one of the most common traps. **Studies of chaotic systems** have shown that the tiniest changes get quickly multiplied in scope--to the point that terminal differences resulting from tiny initial differences are indistinguishable in magnitude from those resulting from large initial differences. What this means--in terms of the movie--is that the delay by a few seconds of an airline crash (which causes virtually no timequake) is unlikely to be any less significant 1,000 years hence than the premature death of a prominent scientist (which cause a timequake of magnitude infinity). (Ed. Note: Now where else are you gonna find such in-depth analysis on a film that barely made it through the first week in most theaters? PREMIERE perhaps? I think not!).

Such problems aside, **Millennium** also suffers from a lack of focus. Nobody seems quite sure about what kind of movie they were trying to make. The film seems like an uneasy love story/sci-fi thriller/ecological warning hybrid. Fortunately, though, the characters are likeable enough and (despite Ladd's constant Playboy-like postures) the actors are sufficiently convincing to make the viewer care about what happens to them. This is especially true of Ladd's thirtieth century valet robot, played sort of like a tin-plated "Alf".

END



Ms. Ladd (probably just after taping "Oprah")

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(HGL from P. 7)

**HGL:** The Grand Guignol was always a curio...of course I was aware of it, as a matter of fact a few years ago someone asked me to write an introduction to a book on the history of the Grand Guignol. We opened one in Old Town, Chicago we called the Blood Shed, then we had trouble with the newspapers taking the ads so we changed it to Cinema Bizarre. We'd stop a picture in the middle and have vampires run out into the audience and have one of them slit the other one's throat and then run off and we'd continue the picture. And this was popular for a while and then there was racial troubles in Old Town and we had to close down.

**CB:** It is safe to say Montag the Magician was a parody of yourself?

**HGL:** I suppose from the outside it may look that way!

**CB:** I mean more a parody of what people see you as, rather than what you really are!

**HGL:** (Laughs) The Evil Manipulator!

**CB:** He's on stage performing these mutilations, you're on a theatre screen performing these mutilations.

**HGL:** But it's all illusion. Including Montag himself.

**CB:** That's true. He turns out to be a phantasm at the end.

**HGL:** Sure, as I do!



Reality or illusion? **The Wizard of Gore.**

### THE GORE GORE GIRLS

**HGL:** We were beginning to parody ourselves, which we finally did in the Gore Gore Girls. That last one was really a parody of all the other pictures. The effects were more horrifying than any other pictures. Today, fifteen years later, there are people who can't sit through the Gore Gore Girls. Not because the acting is poor, which it really isn't, but they see the nipples being cut and the girl getting pushed into the plate of french fries...even today, with all the sophistication they have...

**CB:** How well did the Gore Gore Girls do?

**HGL:** It was in the middle of early release when the axe fell on me, my advertising agency collapsed. It never did get the playoff that I anticipated it getting.

**CB:** How did you secure the talents of Henny Youngman for the film?

**HGL:** A fellow named Bob Dachman who was a professional fund raiser in Chicago, had a son named Alan who wrote this screenplay. His father doted on him and he was a friend of Henny Youngman, so he said I can get you Youngman for this picture for a very small amount of money. And he did.

**CB:** Did you enjoy working with him?

**HGL:** (Laughs) He's almost impossible to understand. I said to him half way into the shooting I'm going to have to put subtitles under him when you speak your lines, because he talks too doggone fast. But he was certainly cooperative and that is what endears someone to my heart. If an actor is cooperative, I can get an acting performance out of anybody. But I've always felt that actors are not the key to a low budget film. At the time I was something of an apostate for saying that, but acting was not the main focus of what I was trying to do.

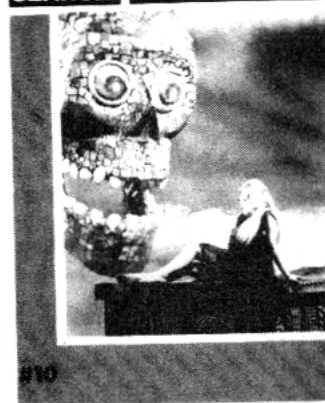
### THE CRITICS AND THE CULT REVIVAL

**CB:** What was the critical response to the films when they were made?

**HGL:** We never made films for the critics. The response was almost always universally negative. We were being gaged by a set of criteria which didn't apply to these movies. These weren't critics pictures, these were purely audience pictures. We were compared with The 10

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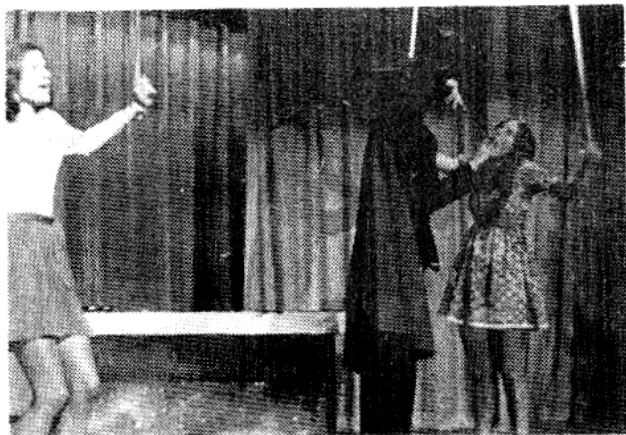
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Grand Guignol a la H.G. Lewis in *The Wizard of Gore*.

Commandments and Ben Hur and Around The World in 80 Days.

We were making these pictures so people could walk out of the theatre and say to their friends, "Wow, you got to see this. The guy pulled the tongue out of the girl's mouth!" That's not a critics picture. Now, in recent years, I've been bemused. I remember once TS Elliot said about a book of commentary on his poems, "I'm glad to find out what I truly meant." But God bless them. I'm pleased in one respect: One of my least favorite films, *The Wizard of Gore*—after I finished it, I said, no one is going to understand this picture. We didn't have the time or the money and this is a case where it showed. Now I see reviews of that movie and they understand it perfectly well. And there are many who think it's a good movie.

**CB:** Video and cable has contributed to this resurgence of interest in your work. Everything is being revived. What do you make out of this new cult status they're putting on you.

**HGL:** I think it's 20 years later than it should be.

**LOST FILMS**

**CB:** Did you make any hillbilly movies?

**HGL:** Well, we shot one which has vanished into the earth. I liked that movie, it was full of folk songs which mostly I wrote because I didn't want to pay anybody royalties. That was the reason, it wasn't ego, in fact I made up a name, Sheldon Seymour.

**CB:** Was this a horror film?

**HGL:** Yeah, a combination of hillbilly and horror. *Moonshine Mountain* was another one of my favorites and the negative to that seems to have disappeared forever. I wish someone would find it. There was a guy named Elvin Feltner who in the very early days of cable made me a 5 year cable deal for *Moonshine Mountain* and *Monster A-Go-Go* and I sent the two negatives to a laboratory in Pittsburgh from whence they never returned. Everyone denied ever having seen it, Elvin Feltner had vanished. One day about four years ago a friend said, "I know where Elvin Feltner is, he lives in Florida not far from you," and I said "Great!" Nothing ever happened, though.

**CB:** That was the only surviving copy of the film.

**HGL:** I don't know. Jim Maslon has a print of it but he tells me that the print is in too bad a condition to try and make a videotape out of it. But if someone offers him \$50,000 to restore that print he'll be glad to do it. It would make me happy because I love that little film and it has lots and lots of folk songs in it, bluegrass-type folk songs.

**CB:** Would you ever consider paying to have it restored.

**HGL:** Certainly not. For what? For my own ego? To have a print to show to friends? No. In regard to video rentals, I no longer own these films, my proprietary interest in these films is limited only to, oddly, the background music.

**CB:** How did you lose ownership of your own films?

**HGL:** When my ad agency went bust, everything was cross collateralized and I had to sell everything out. Let me explain: you owe me money for advertising. I owe money to NBC, ABC, the Chicago Tribune. You go bankrupt. The Chicago Tribune says, "I don't give a doggone, my deal is with you not with your client. You pay me." So now I have to scramble around to find money. In a situation like that, you sell what you have to sell and do what you have to do. That again shows the cloudy crystal ball. I felt these pictures were played out. Who would dream that cable and video tape would revive all this. I call it "The Dreech That Wouldn't Die."

**CB:** Who did you sell the films to originally?

**HGL:** They went through several sets of hands. Now they mostly belong to Jim Maslon who has a thing called Shock Video in Los Angeles. He's the de facto owner. Now I was interviewed on the radio the other day and I mentioned that I wish they could find the negative on *A Taste of Blood* which was a two-hour long Dracula movie. This fellow calls in and says I owe it, I have it! So over the radio, he's sending it off to Jim Maslon to see if it could be marketed, which I'm sure it can. It's a two hour picture which is perfect for cable. It's a more classic type of picture with good acting in it and a lot of production value I think he can do very well with it.

**THE FILM INDUSTRY**

**CB:** Around the time you were filming, Roger Corman started his business. Did you ever have any dealings with him?

**HGL:** Yeah, my friend and sometimes cutter called me one day in great excitement from California. Roger Corman wanted to make a co-production deal with me. I said, "Fine, set it up!" In those days, it was a commuter run for me. I dropped into his office and we had a great conversation. But he wanted to make a picture which later turned out to be Jackson County Jail. The problem was, he said to me, "You shoot this picture, I'll put up \$40,000, you cover up whatever



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the additional costs are and we're partners." Now that sounds simple enough, but when you're talking about a female jail picture, you're not talking about the typical HGL low budget picture. So I put pencil to paper, it was his script by the way, and I felt that is investment would be about \$40,000 and mine would be about \$100,000. So it didn't add up. As much as I would like to have had Roger Corman as a partner, because he's a very bright and very businesslike film professional, it was simply impossible to make that deal.

**CB:** You more or less threw up your hands about the chicanery of the movie business.

**HGL:** I also threw up my dinner. You see, the independent film distributors are a nasty bunch of bandits and the major companies are not that much better when dealing with independents.

**CB:** Let's say a producer came to you today with a deal for movie, and you agreed to the conditions and the arrangements, what's to say the same thing wouldn't happen again?

**HGL:** I have financial protection built in. Also, it would be an ego thing, not a money thing. I certainly don't need the money. But I don't want to be taken advantage of. If I'm protected in terms of the negative, I don't care about the nickel and diming that takes place. I did care when I was the sole owner.

**CB:** What would it be about? Would you write the screenplay?

**HGL:** Sure, if somebody wanted me to. I have a screenplay sitting here called Herschell Gordon Lewis' Grim Fairy Tales. It's episodic which may or may not be in keeping with current procedures.

#### ADVERTISING AND MAIL ORDER

**CB:** The name of your company is Communicomp. What do you do?

**HGL:** I am a direct marketing writer. I write mail packages, I write books on this subject and I am reasonably well known within the direct marketing industry.

**CB:** How does it compare to making the films you used to make?

**HGL:** Well, I play tennis every day. I make twice as much money as I made in the film business and I'm not being cheated by distributors and theater owners. But otherwise (laughs) the difference is one of drama I suppose. I give speeches all over the world but not about film.

**CB:** You have books out about the subject, did you say?

**HGL:** I have eleven books, yes. The best seller is a book called Herschell Gordon Lewis on the Art of Writing Copy. The publisher is Prentis Hall and its at your nearest bookstore, I hope.

**CB:** These have mass distribution then?

**HGL:** Oh yeah, the next best seller is one called Direct Mail Copy That Sells, How to Make Your Advertising Twice As Effective At Half the Cost, How to Write Powerful Fund Raising Letters. These are all books that cover a specific area of the creative process.

**CB:** I was unaware of that.

**HGL:** As you may well know, I always had at least one foot in the advertising business. As a matter of fact it was the advertising business that drove me out of movies. So now I'm considerably more cautious than I was back then.

**CB:** What happened?

**HGL:** In those days I didn't want any direct marketing accounts. I wanted accounts that had television billing and more color pages in

Time Magazine. I had half a floor in the Wrigley Building in Chicago and one day my latest account which was an tv advertiser went bankrupt and it literally swept me out of that building. Suddenly I didn't have half a floor in the Wrigley Building, I had a little loft in Highland Park with more people including me on the keyboard where I had remained. This was in 1973 or 74.

**CB:** Didn't you have some sort of advertising venture before you even started making films?

**HGL:** Well, it was the same one. I had an advertising agency, yes.

**CB:** And you kept this up while you made the films.

**HGL:** Sure did.

**CB:** The ad campaigns for your movies were amazing.

**HGL:** That was my business, others came to me to do campaigns for them. Believe me, when I see these big companies doing big ad campaigns for movies today, I think they are way out of touch with human motivation.

**CB:** Some imitated what you used to do.

**HGL:** I know, Filmed in Blood color and vomit bags in the audience! But you see, whatever they do subsequently, I'll think of something to outdistance them. It's kind of fun to be followed.

**CB:** You've mentioned your interest in Force Communication. Is there a link here between your filmmaking and hypnotism?

**HGL:** (Laughs) I guess it is. Where did you read that? Good heavens! Yeah, I think it is a good link. I salute you. I was at one time a member of Society for Clinical and Spiritual Hypnotism.

**CB:** There does seem to be a link between you as an advertising man which deals with mass psychology and manipulating an audience.

**HGL:** Certainly, it's all a matter of motivation. You manipulate, you hypnotise. It's the willing suspension of disbelief. And that's where we succeed and fail. And that was my objection to the remake of The Fly. The audience just sits there as spectators without involvement. I can't imagine someone watching 2000 Maniacs without involvement.

**CB:** Do you get the same satisfaction out of the mail order business than you did out of making films?

**HGL:** I get satisfaction out of the books I write and the articles I write. It gives me great stature unrelated to notoriety.

END

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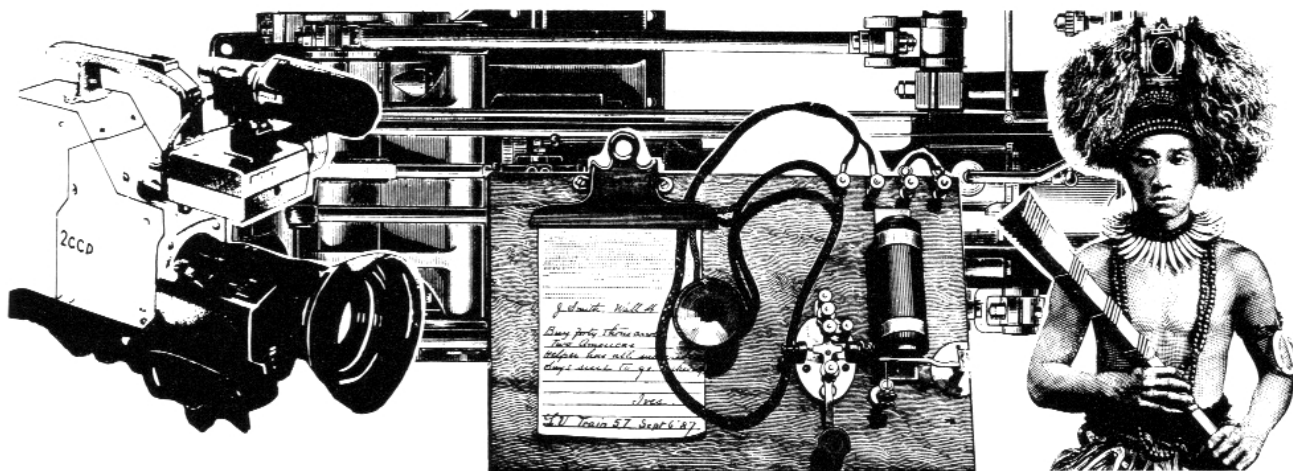
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# VIDEO REVOLUTION



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Here are some examples of tapes you can order from Video-SIG:

☐ **14143 Betaville- A Post Modern Nightmare**

BETAVILLE is a post-modern film noir short directed by N.Y. filmmaker Alyce Wittenstein. Inspired by the film classic ALPHAVILLE, this short parodies Godard's style as well as content. In this film, detective Coman Gettme rescues "the girl" from a dreary industrial world, only to discover that his hometown has become a high fashion fairland. Excellent production values and intelligent dialogue make this an entertaining choice. Color 20 minutes

☐ **12701 Channel K**

The producers of Channel K have assembled an outrageous half-hour spoof of television, featuring spots for "Gomer Heil N.A.Z.I." as well as "Bachelor Pad," where Chad Randolph, the king of sleaze, shows single men how to score chicks and save bread at the same time, and "Handy Dan," who turns his workshop into a chamber of horrors as he attempts to build a dog house. 30 minutes.

☐ **14141 Culture Drop**

CULTURE DROP is a relentless, provocative collection of experimental, comic and music videos, including SEX WITH THE DEAD, ZOMBIE SQUIRT, POLYESTER REX, LAUNDRY WORKERS JIG and many more. Produced by Joe Schwind, portions of this film have received awards and raving reviews from such organizations as The Kansas Film Institute, The Museum of Temporary Art, The Couch Potatoes, and The Church of the Sub-Genius, among others. Color 20 minutes

☐ **14150 Kirk-O-Matic**

KIRK-O-MATIC is a one-hour videotape combining a variety of different special effects, mixing images from a variety of sources. Producer Kirk Hunter describes his creation: "These videos are for background type vids... and not for constant viewing... the visuals are from different gauges of film, Super 8, 16mm - then digitized and mixed again for more of a free for all... Enjoy, but use caution when viewing, it may burn holes in your retina." Color 60 minutes

☐ **13690 Animal Protection**

This compilation of live footage taken inside six animal testing facilities shows aspects of animal experiments which are often hidden from public view. These explicit scenes, some of which were filmed by experimenters themselves, show why the use of animals is being challenged on both scientific and ethical grounds. Some of the experiments depicted were halted after these tapes were publicized by PETA, the nation's largest animal rights organization. Color 105 minutes

☐ **13688 San Francisco Talent Vision: Volume 10**

Taped at various San Francisco nightclubs, SFTV showcases some of the new talent from the SF Bay Area. Choosing from over 300 audition tapes, the producers gathered some of their favorite performers for this prime-time cable program which has been in existence since 1983. In this episode, you'll witness the talents of SHOCK EXCHANGE, TOP CAT and THE STICKBAND. 28 minutes

☐ **12717 Percy Mayfield: Poet Laureate of the Blues**

This documentary of singer/songwriter Percy Mayfield includes concert footage as well as interviews. In this program, you'll develop a greater understanding of this man and his music, including the song "Hit the Road, Jack," which he wrote while working exclusively for Ray Charles. This show won a W.C. Handy Award from the the Blues Foundation. 27 minutes.

☐ **14302 The Brain That Wouldn't Die**

A young surgeon has discovered he can keep alive the head of his fiancée, who was tragically decapitated. With the brain of his lover intact, he goes on a search to find "the perfect body" for her in this 1963 thriller. Bizarre entertainment starring Herb (Jason) Evers and Virginia Leith. B&W 83 minutes

☐ **14218 Hamburgers, Comma, Shoes and Other Stuff**

This exotic little video involves stop-action animation of common household items. Utilizing an adventurous imagination, a camcorder and an original soundtrack, this gem was the winner of the Experimental Category in the Video-SIG Camcorder Contest. This highly recommended tape can be used as a video babysitter again and again. 13 minutes

☐ **13191 Los Olvidados**

One of the great classics among international cinema, LOS OLVIDADOS, directed and written by Luis Bunuel, is a horrifying depiction of poverty, misery and degradation among the slums surrounding Mexico City. Based on actual case studies, Bunuel created a film that combines the sensibilities of neo-realistic social drama of that era with subversive, surrealist and irrational images for which Bunuel is known. This 1950 film, also known as THE YOUNG AND THE DAMNED, has Spanish dialogue with English subtitles. B/W 79 minutes

☐ **14282 Ride in the Whirlwind**

A different kind of Western, written by and starring Jack Nicholson in 1966. Also features Cameron Mitchell and Harry Dean Stanton. Color 83 minutes

☐ **13183 The Trial**

Orson Welles directs Anthony Perkins in this 1963 adaptation of the Kafka novel. B/W 113 minutes

☐ **13733 The Man With the Golden Arm**

Frank Sinatra is the ex-junkie trying to make it as a jazz drummer in this classic 1955 drama directed by Otto Preminger. B/W 120 minutes

☐ **14247 Fantastic Planet**

Journey to a society controlled by robots in this futuristic, adult-oriented animated epic. Named the Grand Prix Special Winner at the 1973 Cannes Festival. Color 68 minutes

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